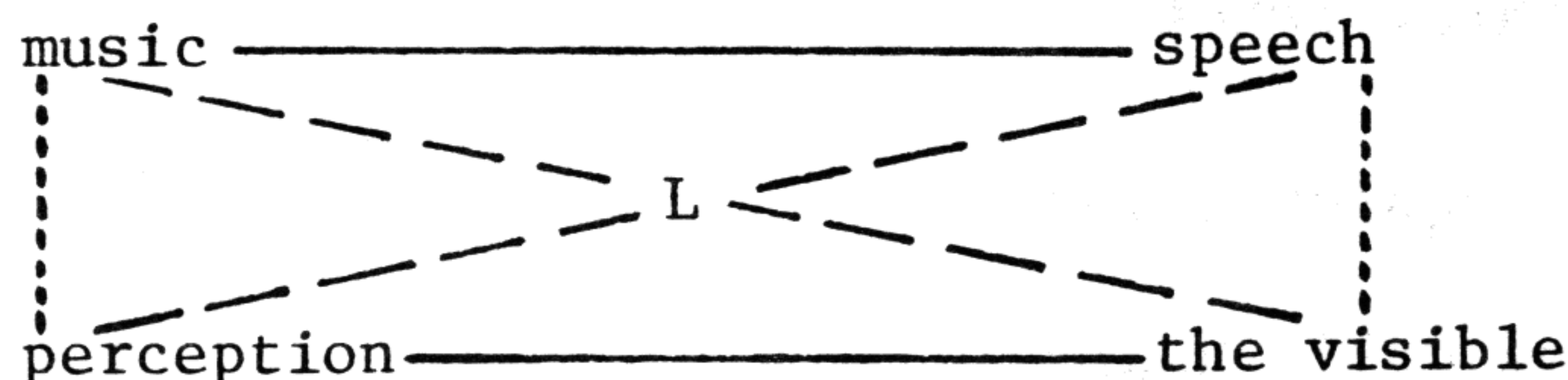


L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E

AUGUST 1978

LOUIS ZUKOFSKY

The first (& for a long time the only) to read Pound & Williams with what we wld recognize as modern eye & ear. Ear tuned tautly toward a double function: intrinsic, language as he found it (i.e., parole); extrinsic, musical composition, determining wholeness, aesthetic consistency, perfect rest. But for whom language began with sight (thus *Bottom* -- love : reason :: eye : mind -- in wch love contains all the significations Benjamin, so like LZ, gave the term aura). In his writing, language (L) synthesizes polar impulses rising dialectically from an equally problematic material base:



Not the tongue his parents spoke, it always carries some trace of Other (hence *Catullus*), tending toward objectification. Each line &/or stanza a study in balance, silence (peace) proposed as maximum stress in all directions, thus active. This never-to-be resolved equilibrium of the spoken within the written within the spoken, etc., is for him the motivating center of craft (the final 28 lines of "A" 23, last words, escort the reader thru the alphabet, letters are presences).

"A living calendar....: music, thought, drama, story, poem" (23). A characteristic distinction: the title is "A", not A. Its open-ended interconnectedness in 1-6 marks the debt to *The Cantos*, but from 7 (w/ wch he chose to represent himself in the Objectivist issue of *Poetry*, 2/31) forward, a new conceptualization as to the function of part-to-whole relations in the formation of a longpoem starts to emerge: each moment is a totalization, complete to itself, capable of entering into larger structures as a relational fact. This integrity of units is radically unlike *Maximus* or *Passages*, tho it includes (requires!) the capacity to incorporate a piece in open form ("A" 12 his *Paterson*) -- this empowers Zukofsky, & he alone, to complete such a work.

April 5, 1928: St. Matthew's Passion is performed at Carnegie Hall & Connie Mack's Athletics, about to start a season of baseball, introduce a new uniform, replacing their elephant logo with a large letter A. These events are reported on facing pages in the Friday *New York Times*.

RON SILLIMAN

"THINK SUN AND SEE SHADOW"

naked sitting and lying awake

dear eyes all eyes

destined actual infinitely initial

rove into the blue initial

an earth of three trees

rendered his requiem alive

blessed ardent Celia happy

an era any time of year

an inequality wind flower

-- (4's & 5's from) Louis Zukofsky

ROBERT GRENIER

L.Z.

All men write poetry, but few are poets. Children know that we may see poetry with our ears: ABCD goldfish? MNO goldfish! OSMR goldfish. And that it is our first delight in words that they hopscotch sequential noise-- A poet, we say, has vision. Louis Zukofsky's vision came from

excision of all but ears to the language itself, letter by letter: A.
Like Nature, he was bent on ever more intricate goldfish. "Homer's Argos
hearing / Handel's Largo as / The car goes". It is needless to state that
this is first a telescope, before it is a poem. Behind the wheel,
fiddling the syllables, the finest ears in the business is heading some-
where 100,000 years an hour (or so). Do you not hear them thunder?

RONALD JOHNSON

31 ASSERTIONS, SLOWLY

Christopher Dewdney, Spring Trances in the Control Emerald Night
(1978; The Figures, 2016 Berkeley, CA 94709; \$2.50)

Here language goes back to the spring we see it come out from.

The air is geology.

Eye is born in its sac.

Each integer vibrates the space between its neighbors, domains in line.

A star a dream of light from which a universe awakens.

Persons are volumes of live matter raised in meeting to 451⁰ fahrenheit,
or cool in water.

Each version is solid eschatology.

In every passage a great whale blocks the sight from the sight but not
from the whale.

Towns are beaches onto which wash.

Through these visions runs a tiny naked and frothing vision.

From the chosen vantage, fireflies are acres of light.

Large balls of silence roll past and through each other, on a border of
nerves and delight.

Sense data fills cylinders with its saturated solution.

Each fossil a photograph of a comet, then, and also.

The literature phosphoresces in slow biologic warp, seeing desire untied
of desire.

Dreams coat the inside of beings, the underside of sight.
Going out in air, the lungs envelop stone history.
A statement nearly restates another, it must be stating itself, must
itself be stated.
Metaphor is one word for two: family resemblance.
History bumps itself off.
Preordination fosters statues.
Organisms are preferred which voice without breaking open their layers,
rather case in them.
Far away objects are simple on protractor limits.
A body part is a testicle of motion.
The aliens are contentedly at home.
360° dreams 0°.
Inside brain a knot surfaces, to be solid text.
One mosquito syphons blood from the fucking body.
The future holds, sustains, each present in sounds.
Preference is an asterisk.
The author escapes from a paragraph, eloping along slightly bottomless
discourse.

ALAN DAVIES

ON JARGON

*(The following is from an article by Fredric Jameson which appeared
originally in The Minnesota Review, Spring 1977)*

A number of things have to be touched on in order to explain why
theoretical writing today is difficult. For one thing, from a Marxist
viewpoint, the truth about social relations and about the place of
culture in them does not lie on the surface of everyday life; it is
structurally concealed by that phenomenon called reification, a phenome-
non generated by the presence of commodities all around us. (See Lukács'

difficult but important study of this process in *History and Class Consciousness*.) And, clearly enough, if commodities are the source of this opacity or obfuscation of daily life, it will get worse rather than better as consumer society develops and becomes world-wide. Indeed, it is a kind of axiom of Marxism that Marx's own discovery of the fundamental laws of social life under capitalism (the labor theory of value) was a unique historical possibility, available only after the dissolution of feudal society and the emergence of industrial capitalism, but then in the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries increasingly covered over again by reification. This means not only that any true account of the mechanisms at work behind daily life and lived experience is going to look "unnatural" and untrue to "common sense" (how can we analyze reification without inventing an ugly word for it?); but also that one of the features of such an account will have to be the destruction of our own habits of reified perception, and the explanation of why we cannot directly or immediately perceive the truth in the first place. A Marxian description of social and cultural life is therefore going to have to be reflexive and self-conscious, as well as hermeneutic, because part of the point to be made by such writing is precisely our own conscious or unconscious resistance to it. Here it should be added that the call for a "plain style," for clarity and simplicity in writing, is an ideology in its own right, and one which has its own history in the Anglo-American tradition. One of its basic functions is precisely to discredit dialectical writing and to secure the ground for one or the other versions of British empiricism or common-sense philosophy.

Now when you block out the situation of dialectical writing in this way, some interesting parallels come to mind.... The parallel which interests me ... in the present context is that with poetry itself. Surely one of the unique features of the situation of poetry today--what we call modernist and Romantic poetry, as opposed to the fixed forms and genres of the verse or chant of precapitalist societies--is its mission to overcome the reification of everyday language. Modern poetry emerges from the inarticulacy of people in contemporary capitalist society. Over against their sense of the "seriality" of daily life and daily speech, that is, the feeling that the center is always elsewhere, that this language belongs not to us who use it, but to someone else, in distant centers of production of the media, publishing, and the like, over against this sense of the draining away to some absent center of the very power to speak, modern poetry reasserts its production of language and reinvents a center. The very difficulty of modern poetry is in direct proportion to the degree of reification of everyday speech; and the simplicity of much of poetry today, in the tradition of William Carlos Williams, is itself a second-degree phenomenon which builds on the complexity of the first wave of poetic modernism.

But if this is the case, then what is striking is not the vast gap

between theoretical jargon and poetic speech, but rather the similarity of the situations they face and the dilemmas they have to overcome. The poets and the theoreticians are both at work desperately in an increasingly constricted network of reifying processes, and both violently have recourse to invented speech and private languages in order to reopen a space in which to breathe. That they should not recognize their mutual interests in each other, that they should, as in the mirror, take each other's image for that of the Other or the enemy, is itself only one of the more advanced ruses of reification, the way capitalism works to separate its subjects from each other and imprison them in the specialized compartments of their own apparently isolated activities.

FREDRIC JAMESON

SCHIZOPHRENIC WRITING

"Dear Doctor

(Dear) I requirte it the took, I got not why ask when why then, I when you, my shall my you small my, why send sned say, send what why I when (when) I received her (she) she has have a cold, so let recusf the result. I have a resuft takes be to take hate from for from far.

What change (cal) can (for) for you. What can I for me. All your the for the porter. Tell you your you ponten you will you go."

"... I like Titbits weekly. I like Titbits weekly too. I should like Titbits ordered weekly. I need jam, golden syrup or treacle, sugar. I fancy ham sandwiches and pork pies. Cook me a pork pie and I fancy sausage rools I want ham sandwiches. I want tomatoes and pickles and salt and sandwiches or corn beef and sandwiches of milk loaf and cucumber sandwiches. I want plain biscuits buttered, rusks, and cheese biscuits I want bread and cheese. I want Swiss roll and plain cake, I want pastries, jam tarts. I should like some of your pie you have for second course, some pastry...."

"... Now to eat if one cannot other one can--and if we cant the girseau Q.C. Washpots prizebloom capacities--turning out--replaced by the head-patterns my own capacities--I was not very kind to them. Q.C. Washpots underpatterned against--bred to pattern. Animal sequestration capacities and animal sequestired capacities underleash--and animal secretions. Q.C. Washpots capacities leash back to her--in the train from Llanfairfechan

Army barracks wishe us goodbye in Llandudno station and turned in several Q.C. Washpots capacities...."

-- from letters by 2 clinically diagnosed schizophrenics (last quotes) and an aphasiac patient (first quote).

There is no schizophrenic language. Bear this in mind. Twenty-five years of psycholinguistic research into the phenomenon of the often bizarre twists of language spoken by schizophrenic individuals has yet to produce a single undisputed definition of what a schizophrenic language is and what sets it apart from the utterance of other speakers.

But an interesting side effect that developed while these same researchers were trying to come to grips with the problem of defining schizophrenic speech is the jargon they used to describe it. These terms are of some interest beyond their use in schizophrenic research for they also describe certain common patterns in the way language is used in modern poetry. In fact this commonality with poetic language has been one of the chief stumbling blocks to attempts to isolate the schizophrenic speaker from other kinds of language users. As one of the more perceptive researchers noted, the problem is the same as trying to define "Poetic language." You may know it when you hear it, and can describe it adequately, but there are no hard and fast rules to set it apart from other types of language.

I offer a small list of these terms because they seem to describe poetry in a way which you might recognize but never really have noticed. I offer them with one precaution: don't confuse schizophrenic speech with poetic language. A schizophrenic monologue will sometimes lapse into passages that are pure poetry...with the same carefree play of language found in poetry...but to treat it as a freakish bit of literature is to overlook the fact that these bizarre turns of language are the product of a torturous state of mind.

PRIMARY PROCESS THINKING, or "unconscious thinking" as Joseph Bleuler, a 19th century psychologist, first termed it. Freud refers to this as the activity of the unconscious mind in waking and dream states. This way of seeing is distinct from the self-conscious perception of "object-reality." In schizophrenia, this interior vision often supplants a more objective reality. Metaphor and dream imagery are two manifestations of primary process thinking at work.

AMBIGUITY is part of the double-bind hypothesis of schizophrenic speech. That is, the schizophrenic, fearful of the consequences of a direct response, couches his replies in guarded, ambiguous language. In other

words, schizophrenics talk in meaningful gibberish so you don't realize what they mean is gibberish.

CONCRETE VS. ABSTRACT ORIENTATION. Most ordinary conversation leans heavily on figurative language. A "normal" speaker, given the choice of an abstract or concrete interpretation of an ambiguous word such as "concrete" will tend to err in favor of the abstract. The opposite is true in schizophrenics who tend towards an over-literal bias.

AUTOMATIC SPEECH or SCATTER TALK ... long rambling spontaneous monologs often with little apparent connection or provocation. The quality of the language is often obsessive and at times seems to be "writing itself," that is, words spoken a few seconds before will prompt more words which in turn...etc... This is also referred to as SELF-GENERATING LANGUAGE. The speaker is almost just a vessel for it.... COPROALIA is scattertalk marked by an obsessive flow of escatological or sexually abusive language. DERAILMENT ... is the principle pattern underlying automatic speech... a curious metaphor for thought...as in the train of thought is oft derailed. ... is also sometimes called the TANGENTIAL RESPONSE.... a sort of flying off the linguistic handle...speaking in endless digressions... forever leading to nowhere... IMMEDIATE RESPONSE ... talk is often laced with references from the immediate field of vision...a patient's conversation with a doctor for example is filled with words taken from titles of books on a shelf behind him.... dimming the room actually cuts down on the flow of automatic speech. MUTISM... is the opposite extreme...a patient goes for years without uttering a word... Often the language is peppered with NEOLOGISMS... new words often coined with onomatopoetic genius...e.g., the man who called doves, "wuttas"... PUNS are also frequent and outrageous. The language is also marked by REPETITION of certain words and an extreme lack of normal conversational REDUNDANCY.... that is, more words used in a given speech sample than normal subjects... and rapid CONTRADICTION... severe language breakdown is often accompanied by PERSEVERATION... the collapse of phonetic word boundaries... schizophrenics are often more in touch with the word's sound than with its sense.... What results is the breakup of words into smaller syllabic units & new words...e.g., "analyst" becomes "anal list"...or else nonsense sounds... less frequent phenomena are the WORD SALAD... long strings of words with no apparent syntactical connection.... most schizophrenics have a conventional grammar intact however.... and GIBBERISH... speaking in fragments of words... often from two or three different languages.

(For other information & research material on this topic, write the author at 7435 Boulevard East, North Bergen, NJ 07047.)

JOHN ENSSLIN

HOW FAR APART?

I want to have words here--either a very long distance apart--a football field, an airport runway--the longest continuous space you can be in and still feel its outside bounds--not an abstraction like, say, California, too big, uninhabitable--or else have the words very close together--so no space seems to intervene--and yet they don't feel on top of each other--consecutive, packed.

At what point would the form be the most insistent content--how far away would the words have to get--a line, a triple-space, a page, a room--or how close--an 'm,' an 'n,' an 'i,' the thinnest blade of a feeler-gauge?

How grand would a poetry have to be to alter the course of your life--what kind of trust must an author engender in you to invoke energies strong enough to shape your life--must the writing include sex, love, dreams, a conflict-climax-and-resolution?

Does it sound more real if it's repeated--does it give more pleasure if it's repeated--does it recall the elders if it's repeated--does it polarize the nervous system if it's repeated again?

Light is called in so often as the ultimate metaphor--when an experience of it is reached the poem has arrived--many poets point or lead to this element from which value emanates--I don't experience the world this way--water's my element--when a new wave dislodges the snagged branch and sets it afloat in the current--all is well.

I like to use a long-line syntax because it acts like a whiplash when you get to the end pointing back--a circle you can stand inside--a hedge that bounds a lawn game--or a hawthorn crown--anyhow, it leans in, and so holds its own ground as it goes--full of holes, but content.

When I took drum lessons each of the rudimentary beats was given a name for its sound--flamadiddle, paradiddle and so forth--each begins as slowly as possible--starting with the left stick--gradually increasing in speed, up to the point the rudiment's characteristic patten emerges--half in control half out--then on to as fast as you can push it--then gradually let up on speed--back to that slow-up point where you take the sticks off automatic and engage manual again--and on to the slowest possible beat--ending on a right hand stroke....

FATHER, MOTHER, SISTER, WIFE, SELF--to detach, to incorporate--they swoop in and block out the world--one can't make anything happen--pain and loss and pain and loss--what more can be said--how far away would one have to

move for the world to begin to be visible--out of town, out of touch, out of the past, out of the fierce insistence on this never recurring?

STEPHEN FREDMAN

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

"

(f) g

.....&/or th
(f) (f)v(f)n root of a - # &/or (32 &/or 66) &/or wh(f)n &/or
.....

2 bruc(f) andr(f)ws & th(f) r(f)ad(f)rs of l=a=n=g=u=a=g=(f),
lst r(f)action as r(f)spons(f) 2 r(f)vi(f)w of
book unlab(f)l(f)d, unnam(f)d, 2.

th(f) book X m(f)

th(f) r(f)f(f)r(f)nt 4 which consists of

th(f) non-mat(f)rializ(f)d punch-outs

from a transpar(f)nt l(f)tt(f)r/what(f)v(f)r st(f)ncil.

(65 print(f)d surfac(f)s, \$3 (n(f)gotiabl(f)).

mad sci(f)ntist/dcompos(f)r/sound-think(f)r/thought-coll(f)ctor

manif(f)sting/xpr(f)ssing via writing

(occasionally).

l(f)ss tradition than r(f)occurr(f)nc(f).

car(f)fully consid(f)r(f)d manif(f)station of

awar(f)n(f)ss of

anything is anything,

tim(f)

(consid(f)r substitution),

s(f)lf, spac(f), humor, #, & r(f)ad(f)r/writ(f)r r(f)lationship,

at l(f)ast,

cr(f)at(f)s obliqu(f), subtl(f), & v(f)ry pr(f)s(f)nt structuring
(sparing &/or poking ribs).

r(f)j(f)ction of

t(f)chnical at xp(f)ns(f) of psychical,

r(f)fin(f)d at xp(f)ns(f) of raw.

qu(f)stion ur conc(f)ption of what is intrinsic in languag(f).

abolitionism of word also non-occurring in ur r(f)vi(f)w.

ur quot(f)s, paraphrasing, & articl(f) in g(f)n(f)ral

r(f)v(f)al substantial non-obs(f)rvation of

m(f)ntion(f)d structuring,

much significanc(f) & vari(f)ty,
& som(f) non-dnotational implications
((f)g non-intro grid)
(not quot(f)d 2 avoid loss du(f) 2 cont(f)xtual displac(f)m(f)nt
but,
ur critiqu(f) of c(f)rtain abs(f)nc(f) of control,
(f)sp(f)cially of th(f) non-r(f)f(f)r(f)ntial implications
as accurat(f), dsirabl(f), & appr(f)ciat(f)d.
(although, consid(f)r ur, & oth(f)rs', succ(f)ss in that ar(f)a
2 b satisfactory 2 m(f)
(&, th(f)r(f)for(f), not as int(f)r(f)sting 2 xplor(f))).
(m curr(f)ntly mor(f) int(f)r(f)st(f)d in
dtaching languag(f) from physicality
(i (f) (f) g sound, writing)
in incr(f)asingly autistic
(from artist 2 autist)
way
non-us(f) of languag(f),
& sound thinking
(as n(f)ith(f)r sound nor sil(f)nc(f)),
at l(f)ast.
n(f)v(f)rth(f)l(f)ss, m dlight(f)d as r(f)spons(f) 2 xist(f)nc(f) of
r(f)vi(f)w.

MICHAEL FREDERICK TOLSON

SILLIMAN

FOR L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E

Word's a sentence before it's a word--I write sentences--When words are,
meaning soon follows--Where words join, writing is--One's writing is one
writing--Not all letters are equal--2 phrases yield an angle--Eye settles
in the middle of word, left of center--Reference is a compass--Each day--
Performance seeks vaudeville--Composition as investigation--Collage is a
false democracy--Spelling's choices--Line defined by its closure: the
function is nostalgic--Nothing without necessity--By hand--Individuals do

not exist--Keep mind from sliding--Structure is metaphor, content permission, syntax force--Don't imitate yourself--We learned the language--
Aesthetic consistency = voice--How does a work end?

RON SILLIMAN

MOHAWK AND KETJAK

An article in the April issue of *Scientific American* on mathematically generated music refers to "fractal curves," which show the same fluctuating patterns over time for any duration. Ten minutes of event would have the same ratio of peaks to troughs as ten years, but "the fractals that occur in nature--coastlines, rivers, trees, star clustering, clouds and so on--are so irregular that their self-similarity (scaling) must be treated statistically." In language self-similarity (statement) is irregular and constant while words can shift scale. Kid says "You die!" not having the same outcome as in the movies or war, but the words in each case point abstract finger to exert will. Imagination, thinking build on these facts of natural language: "The so-called idea of a word... is the so-called word itself--the word."

In *Mohawk* Silliman discovers/invents a kind of fractal curve from a fixed set of words over 30 pages. The scale telescopes from word-to-word jumps to page "flicker noise" to curve of the whole, but the irregularity and energy seen in the words is constant. The fixed vocabulary and use of the two-dimensional page give the work a flatness and autonomy; the writer is outside the work. Coolidge's earlier investigation into word-gap led to writing which is now mainly intrinsic, thinking along a line, while Silliman is involved with extrinsic dimensions--landscape, national boundaries, demography. The distance he found from the page in *Mohawk* makes it the first term in a series of works in variable scale, an entrance. This distance is close to the clearly imagist quality of the words: "wet/loom/star/wicker/silt...", each word a snapshot on the page.

Ketjak is written in paragraph blocks, each twice the length of the previous. Repeated material makes an infra-skeleton, though sentences used more than once take on new values. Given this mechanism, the work was slowly deliberately written over some months. It is a fractal curve of an experience which might reduce to "revolving door." The work's step-wise progress makes for an evaluative mode of thinking--values of the sentences are revealed in how they jive with those around them. Some are

sour notes, lost handles, not repeated. Others become familiar landscapes of daily life, the noon whistle. The imagist core of Silliman's sentences shows through variation of emphasis. Frozen narratives in series add up to what could be read as a completely interior novel. This activity is "an expression of an euphoria." Meanwhile the distance from the text fleshes out all manner of gossip, theory, fact. "Then we made a map of the entire country, on exactly the same scale. It was impossible to put into use."

Only someone who had thought intensely about the fate of other peoples' lives could have written *Ketjak*. This morality is in the distance from the text and in the insistence on particular information. Silliman allows ideology into his poem along with trivial facts not usually accepted as important. So there can be an evaluation, change of state. One is outside, invents a position, insists on what he sees. Conflict produces the purest types of writing. To imagine another life without power gives value to the fact. Identity is all that literary politics can produce. *Ketjak* is a political act. Identity in Silliman's work is open-ended.

BARRETT WATTEN

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OFFICIAL POETRY & CONFORMIST ENTERTAINMENT

(Following is an excerpt from Eric Mottram's Toward Design in Poetry -- 1977, *Writer's Forum*, 262 Randolph Ave., London W 9; \$1.75)

The current Establishment conception of poetry -- indeed, of all the arts -- is classicist. Horace's *Ars Poetica* is the fit monument to the living-death practices of the Movement, the Conquest conquistadors, the Arts Council's literary commissar, Radio Three's 'Poetry Now', the Dulwich Group, Oxford's professor of poetry, and the rest. There would be no point in lambasting their dullness and Grub Street jostlings for power except that their tastes and publicist talents dominate the Press and the educational system. The belief is that poetry is decoration, the accompaniment of conspicuous consumption. In fact a conjugation of Horace with Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of The Leisure Class* (1899) can show the Romanised decadence of the predatory literary bosses, and their patrons. *Ars Poetica* lays down advice and duties for the would-be 'successful' poet -- decorum and good taste through genres placed in a hierarchy of acceptable types, adaptations of accepted models, obedience to fixed criteria which criticism is believed to contain. The young are advised to imitate the older, to please patrons, to reject cathartic or any other disturbing experience in art. The poet is the servant of patronage. Poetry is a pastime. Greek originals are reduced from complexity to consumer simplicities. The artist is a conformist entertainer.... Form must follow social utility. The predatory class dictates the limits of creativity, and would place a boundary on extasy and the outward figure of inventiveness. Poetry is part of leisure along with comedians and cigarettes, 'my car' and 'the box'. In Veblen's terms, 'the criteria of past performance of leisure therefore commonly takes the form of 'immaterial' goods': 'shrewd mimicry and a systematic drill have been turned to account in the deliberate production of a cultured class'. If a poem cannot be owned, as part of property and possessions, or be a hymn to an established cause or cult, it should not exist. To be possessed by a poem or a performance, however briefly the catharsis may be, strikes terror to the leisure class because, like the presence of the new, it lies outside the expenditure of energy on money, property, comfort and disciplinarian hierarchy. 'The predatory culture' wishes to annex the arts, to consume poetry as a luxury or to ignore it altogether or be comforted by its platitudes reinforcing the status quo. To ensure the correct kind of luxury art, charity is doled out in an inflationary economy, or a totalitarian one, through patronage.... 'But in order to be respectable (poetry) must be wasteful'.... In Veblen's terms, the neo-classical performer is governed by a 'process of selective adaptation of designs to the end of conspicuous waste': 'A limited edition is in effect a guarantee -- somewhat crude, it is true -- that this book is

scarce and it therefore is costly and lends pecuniary distinction to its consumer'.

Within the criteria of the leisure class lies the assumption that design expresses a prior formed thought or feeling, clearly obvious to any untrained glance.... To the classicist, shapes are finite.... Composition is a set of decisions within choices, but improvisation can be simply repetition, as most poetry and jazz in established modes is: that is, it has become commercialized design, or it has become the fearful recapitulation of minor artists. The degree of alert creativity within intelligence and sensitivity reaches its vanishing point and is supported by patronage.... The artist (can) choose against patronage and critics. As Picasso is the last artist to sustain the role of Master Artist...so it may be that the role of Master Poet is no longer a viable position -- or has to be reinvented. [One alternative to this tradition is the use of systematic procedures as in what's sometimes called systems-art and systems-poetry.] It is certainly the implication arising within Ron Padgett and David Shapiro's anthology of New York Poets (1970). A group may use systems which group them. Projective verse poets use recognizable procedures which group them as much as poets using heroic couplets in Queen Anne's reign or petrarchan sonnets in Tudor decades.... (Yet) poetry-form addiction may, quite as much as criticism addiction, result from a man's or a group's need for security, for a bounded sense of availability, a defense against revolutionary art, against the artist who subverts, disrupts, destroys 'too far'.... The function of official poetry and criticism is to historicize art, place it in linear succession so that it becomes part of something called 'tradition'.... The totalitarian nature of official criticism's inclusiveness is as vampiric as the state system it imitates. The New Critics of Nashville in the thirties may be compared with the State Capitalist commissars of taste in the period of Soviet socialist realism, as ideologically coercive predators. The one defined freedom as bourgeois western individualism within the encompassments of Church and State hierarchy. The other defined a line of revolutionary ideology -- the editorial in Mayakofsky's Lef magazine stating that art must be 'the supreme formal engineering of the whole of life'.... The dominant critics of the era of twentieth-century criticism -- a curious phenomena lasting from 1920 to 1950 -- have been the servants of a rigidly conservative state and church stasis, or a return to a maturity defined as the craft freedom of a wheelright in his village shop....

ERIC MOTTRAM

SUBMISSIONS OF RELEVANT MANUSCRIPTS ARE WELCOME.

TRYING TO BE CENTERED ... ON THE CIRCUMFERENCE

(The following excerpt is taken from Richard Foreman's notes on his work, written to accompany his recent production of "Blvd. de Paris (or I've Got the Shakes)")

O.K. It's about the rhythmic oscillation, very fast, between insideness and outsideness. It's about the tapestry (many threads from many sources) weaving itself and reweaving itself. That process.... Things bleed in unexpected ways into other things. A reverberation machine! ...

The theme is to document in the plays a certain kind of 'constructed' behavior (my invention) in which mentation, mental-acts, take place on an outside surface...not hidden away inside. Thinking as the product of field-interchange. ...

So there isn't progression or development (19th century ediface complex: impressive what man can do) there is rather - like the electron - a 'being potentially present' in many places at once. Structures of potentiality, not heavy, massive edifaces.

And The staging like that too. It MIGHT be staged to mean THIS ... a kind of attention ... but invaded, immediately undercut, by THIS DIFFERENT shape or realm of discourse or object or rhythm.

Breakfast ... invaded by geometry

geometry ... invaded by desire

desire ... invaded by houses

houses ... invaded by a direction ... or other 'not identifiable's'; simply rhythms, qualities, etc: And that cross reference to different discourse systems

The energy of that jumping, that shifting, is what DRIVES thought.

My plays not ABOUT THOUGHT, but ABOUT WHAT DRIVES thought.

Like energy released by a quantum jump.

Trains of discourse being jumped. ... POLYPHONIC MUSIC....not the development from cell to cell, but.... continual thematic modulation.... listen vertically. ... a certain kind of attention, like a cloud of agitated particles,... leaving the trace.

To create that field (rather than allowing consciousness to be hypnotized) my plays keep 'changing the subject'. But is it changed? Since the subject is the field, not spoken of directly, but articulated, layed out, by the writing of 'things'

The pleasure I take (writing) is the pleasure of intercutting: interrupting: an impulse I want to (and do) make. The impulse is registered, but allowed to twist, turn, block itself, so that blockage, that reaction to its energy, produces a detour, and the

original impulse maps new, contradictory territory. ...

On purpose, on the root level of expression-of-impulse, I try to get into the greatest difficulty possible. Syntactically, logically, rationally, narratively. 'Train-of-thought' trouble and blockage is cultivated. The center of the work is in that trouble, stumbling, drift, in that resistance to all 'effort' which is, I maintain, the source of all reflexivity. That "coming up against things" which is the experience that forces us to "see". ...

My plays, therefore, postulate, for me, a PARADISE where the 'allowed' mental move is the move to undercut all impulses, to self-block, to strategically change the subject, so that a desired emotion is produced....

A profound undertaking, but the word profound must be replaced, so that we no longer follow its lead in thinking that the ultimate is a matter of 'depth' - but come to understand it as a matter of wideness, greater and greater distribution of the self over the spread network of what is available, the web of everything interrupting everything else upon that surface over which our lives are always wandering.

Therefore, when it seems that my plays, line by line, are changing the subject, that is true - but that changing of subject is the ground of the real subject, an openness and alertness resulting from a "non-human" (post-humanistic) wandering over the whole field of everything-that-is-discoursing to us. ...

RICHARD FOREMAN

POETICS OF THE ALPHABET

1. The torrent of books about the ABC's hardly touches the poetics of script. It is strange that though number symbolism in literature has many books devoted to it, letter symbolism has not. Linguistics as opposed to philology has not hitherto included the study of letters.

2. Are the linguistic sign and/or the letterform arbitrary-conventional-opaque-unmotivated or natural-transparent-motivated? This has been argued back and forth throughout the ages in most of the World's literate cultures. There have been geniuses ranged on both sides. The following have considered the sign to be "natural" (or one of its quasi-synonyms): Plato, Aquinas, Lessing, Pope, Vico, Shelley, Claudel, Sartre, etc. The

"arbitrarian" position has been embraced by: Rabelais, Shakespeare, Berkeley, Butler, Marx, de Saussure, etc. Most orthodox modern linguistics is based upon the sign's arbitrariness-conventionality-opacity-nonmotivation. But there have been some important exceptions, e.g. Jakobson, Bolinger, etc. Many poets and other practitioners of language arts have considered that their practice would be impossible if the linguistic sign were arbitrary. Allott (1973) and Genette (1976) are invaluable for a study of the "anti-arbitrarian" position which is the underpinning to the following sections of this note.

3. The sounds of letters and the meanings of either or both. Practitioners and theoreticians of poetry (the best of whom are also practitioners) have itemised the significations of various speech sounds. Those who have done this fascinating work range from Dionysius of Hallicarnassus to Mallarmé and Edith Sitwell, etc. There have also been numerous experiments on phonetic symbolism in various languages reported in academic psychological and even linguistic journals. The study of similar words in unrelated languages and of mouth gestures has revealed much about phonetic symbolism. Linguistic study of photo-aesthetics is beginning to develop.

4. Letternames and their meaning. Most ancient ABC's have letternames which are also the names of things, e.g. in Phoenician, Hebrew, Runic, Old Slavonic, etc. The letter in question is usually the initial of the lettername. In less ancient ABC's, e.g. Roman, the letter in question slips into a non-initial position in the lettername: eF, eL, eM, eN, aR, eS, eX. In some modern ABC's this reversal is avoided, e.g. in Korean, Bulgarian, and Turkish.

5. Scripts and scriptures, the spirit of the letter. The following make a fascinating study: creation legends of various ABC's, Greek letter lore, the Kabbala in the Judaic and other related faiths, Jaffr in Arabic, Tantric letter symbolism in Sanskrit and Tibetan, Christian letter symbolism.

6. The letter in literature as constellation, pictogram or ideogram has been manifested: rarely in Chinese and other languages using Chinese script (Ho Chi-minh's WORDPLAY in his PRISON DIARY, Japanese concrete poetry), Mallarmé & Apollinaire in French, Fenellosa, Pound and a host of others (mainly critics) in English. There have been swarms of letterform similes in English (Nabokov), French (Claudel, Robbe-Grillet), German, Spanish (Gomez de la Serna) and Russian (Nabokov) literatures. This mode is even commoner in advertising.

7. Picture ABC's for children & others. Pictorial ABC's were part of ancient, medieval and baroque mnemonic systems. Most of these were based on the initial letter principle which has already broken down in Roman times. A few children's ABC's were based on similarities between the pictured object and the letterform. A smaller number on similarities

between letterforms and mouthshapes. Some artists, e.g. Klee, used letterforms in their art. There has always been a dynamic interchange between picture and letterform.

8. Occult letterform correspondences. There are historical and comparative correspondences between letters, the Zodiac, planets, parts of the human body, numbers, etc. Some argue that the origin of the ABC lies in the Zodiac.

9. Letters and their colours. Synaesthesia, Etiemble's masterly humorous comparative study of Rimbaud's vowel sonnet, its predecessors, imitators and "explanations". Coloured letters in children's primers.

10. The word and flesh. Sexual symbolism as a source of letters (Kallir). Modern outcrops of erotic letterform similes in Persian, Turkish, Gogol, Robbe-Grillet, etc.

12. Letterforms and mouthshapes. At least 30 writers including me have held that the parallels between letterforms and the shape of the inside and/or outside of the mouth may be part of the origin and/or development of letterforms. There are neuro-physiological arguments in favor of this idea, non-existence of totally silent reading or for that matter listening. The Korean ABC is designed according to this parallel as well as occult correspondences. (No contradiction involved between both modes or between them and other explanation of Graphogenesis, e.g. Acrophony, punning, pansexualism, etc). The ABC has multiple causality (Kallir). Possibility that letter-mouth link-up applies to Greek, Devanagari, Roman, Hebrew, etc. scripts.

13. Graphology. The link between handwriting and personality has become widely accepted even in scientific circles. Poe, Gorky, Graves and Nabokov on.

15. Gesture and letter. 'V'-sign, 'O'-sign, Chi-rho-sign as gestures. Gestural theories of language.

16. Notes. I have been systematically studying the above, but the surface has hardly been scratched. I would welcome: information, correspondence, comments, criticism, advice, commissions for articles, lectures, books: Mayer, Dept. of Visual Communication, School of Art & Design, Goldsmiths College, University of London, Lewisham Way, London SE 14 6NW. Readers who wish more material may turn to the following: Peter Mayer, "Speech as Mime or Gesture" (in Krolok 3; Writers Forum, 262 Randolph Ave, London W9); Mayer, "15 Variations upon Ho Chi Minh's *Wordplay*" (in West Coast Poetry Review 17; 1127 Codel Way, Reno, Nevada 89503); Mayer, Poetry Information 18 (18 Clairview Rd., London SW16); A. Kallir, *Sign and Design: The Psychogenetic Source of the Alphabet* (James Clarke, London 1961; re-

issue forthcoming); Robin Allott, "The Physical Foundation of Language, Exploration of a Hypothesis" (Allott, 29 Headland Ave, Seaford, Sussex); G. Genette, *Mimologiques Voyage en Cratylie* (Coll. Poétique Seuil, Paris 1976); Etiemble, *Le Sonnet des Voyelles; De L'audition Colorée à la Vision Erotique* (Coll. Les Essais, Gallimard, Paris 1968).

PETER MAYER

LINE SITES

Loris Essary, Ending (1977; Noumenon Press, P.O. Box 7068, University Station, Austin, Texas 78712; \$2)

First book, "syllabled to us". Observations occur in a line, sways-in-sways-out, narrow, at times virtually disappearing: 1,2,3 or 4 words *draw* a vertical line, re-materialized. Form is visible, as walking bass:

the
isthmus
between

spaces

dreams
countless
known

times

an audience

Line, abrupt, as interminable stop, as pause, combined -- not (as, say, Creeley) with pointed self, but instead: outward hints, at *differing speeds*, with form at helm. Essay. Yet the constituents of 'outside' comments are *aligned*, & flattened: referentially oblique & mobile in construction. Vehicles vs. Edifices. As profound as any parts of a reference to all the least parts -- no longer center/periphery relations: representation as artificial hierarchy. Instead: "only .. a .. word endless ecstatic undemonstrable"

BRUCE ANDREWS

LAZY MADGE

Douglas Dunn, Annabel Levitt, Lazy Madge, Score (1977; Vehicule Editions, 238 Mott St., NY, NY 10012, \$1.50)

(Lazy Madge is a piece that Douglas Dunn and his company of dancers have performed several times in the last couple of years, most recently in April at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; *Score* is a book about/for/by this dance)

... as what used to be called metaphor is to reference..., so by positing an 'irony' of reassembly, of a sufficient distance to resist most claims of narrativist arrogation, Dunn sets up arcs or circuits of resonance ('the images of the young'), sidestepping the bald maneuvers of conventionally rhetorical art by transferring some of the responsibility for the completion of the basic figure of the argument, such as it is -- some of the work toward achieving the trope -- over to elements, factors usually thought necessary to be overcome in order to get a complete work, disjunctive, aleatory: dancers' schedules, dancers' memory, the ways bodies are different and not matchable, what usually has to be gotten in line becomes the line.

an "on-going choreographic project," heterogenous and non associated (dictions, tongues) types of movement, not improvisation, some reappearing sequences--an unspiralling leading to runs; the members of the company are *decisively* involved in the presentation of the piece, as the performance of the work proceeds they determine the order and timing of the bits of the piece they carry in their memory, to the extent to which Lazy Madge has been broken down, made discrete, that is the gauge of the degree of change as each performance gives the same movement in a different order or sense, each evening then simultaneously unique and uniform.

"I'd like to tell you a little about this piece/dance about a young girl dancing as she would like to be," 'the images (la-zy madge) of the young dancer,' starting to see, the terms of a discipline, the pieces, the parts of the world perhaps beginning to fall into some kind of lucidity

the members of the company by their age and their formative part in the performance of the piece appear as both image of the avowed aboutness of the work (...the young dancer) and the means by which the turn, the figure of the reference, the idea Dunn poses of the dance as a transmittal of knowledge of the world or various worlds (including the world of dance) from one body to another (dancer to dancer, instructor to class--choreographer to company, and performer to audience) is completed and in a way validated by the accrued overlay of coincidence and by the way the dance

seems to evince actual existence (it's alive it changes) a somewhat odd caroming pierrot life which gradually assumes a more developed aspect, a persona, not unlike a young dancer

suggested in the wide angle of acceptance, taking on particularizable luggage, metaphoric content, or a degree of representation turning out to be just another pliable ingredient as manipulable and surface as the more formal elements of radical dancemaking. The referential component ("I like character/ trying to pull her into my world--/ now seeing her again as part of, you know, the world/ or trying to see her as all of my world/ now part of some of my world/ also giving up living only in my world") is not a calculated thing. suggested again in the unabated attention, the phenomenological analyses of the body and of motion, and by his surrender of part of the dance, some of the decisions about it, over to (the) dance, an offering, the possibility of a return, a re-turn that does not chafe from reaction, accomplished by his particular rearrangement of the means of presentation,

The book and the dance complement each other, the piece gives us the monster full blown, the book offers notes, lists, dreams, strategy, notation, poems, phone numbers, definitions, the broth she came from, arranged in a somewhat casual order that recreates a sense of the dance as it elucidates it, showing us that many things we thought we saw were in fact along with many others being balanced at once, not unlike listening along to a concert with a score.

MICHAEL GOTTLIEB

THE GEOMETRY OF THE BEAUTIFUL HORIZON

(A GEOMETRIA DO BELO HORIZONTE)

The Horizon, the separating Circle that divides us from the Unbounded, suffers the intrinsic Invisibility of all true Lines. If this Property has gone largely unnoticed, it is undoubtedly because of all the Things that come to intervene between and obstruct and finally eclipse this the outermost Ring of the World-System. In this way, the Horizon lies in Double Concealment, in Transparency and Occultation; and therefore, it is doubly wrong to speak of seeing, let alone seeing beyond or over, the Horizon.

Still, we discover that it is given to Movement and Change, to Expansion and Contraction. It breathes, the Universe, along side of its

sundry Collaborators. And through the Perturbations that sound across the Surface it borders and defines, this ultimate Delineation is capable of capturing or setting free, of appointing or casting out what chances to fall within or without its finishing Assignment of Boundaries.

To us, turned out in its Midst, and fond of being at the Window, the Fabric of the World stretched smoothly across its Frame plays evenly against the Air. But were we somehow to make our Way past the Edge of all this and to look back from the Outside, all the myriad Coherences would dissolve and disappear from View; for this Path ushers us to the other Sense of Without.

Here, as in a Theater, behind the Scenes, there are no Images of fair Creation to come upon, only the dull, disjointed Machinery of Representation quietly at work discreetly raising and lowering Curtains. And there is a second Motion, that emerges over Time. Just as a great silver Mirror orients itself and gathers in the Skyline, its Focus falling always within the Shelter of a dark Concavity, so the Rim of the half-false Coin that is the World continually tilts its heavy obverse inner Face northward.

Then, from its Origin, silently unbound the Lightning outruns the Thunder, bleeding through the Horizon while bringing forth and seeming to fix in passing the very Forms of the interposing World. It is precisely this surprising Turn, the suddenly half Reflection, that creates the sustained Illusion of Definition, like the Magic that only appears to issue from the unconcealed Gestures of the downstage Hand, while in truth, the Frontier, tired of the repeated Perfection of the Device, long ago set out unobserved in the opposite Direction.

The Tide, the Secret Tide!...a mere specular Elongation pulls us in its Wake until our fragile metaphorical Craft at last breaks up under the Influence of our Object, the differential Attraction evoked by its Proximity. Why, then, have we ventured again and again always to this identical Limit?

According to a Spanish Proverb: Love at a Distance is for Fools, for Cowards.

"Love and Art do not embrace what is beautiful, but what becomes beautiful exactly through the Embrace."

"The secret of happiness is to admire without desiring. And that is not happiness." See that even so far from the brink, you are caught by surprise in your wanting to reach out and meet it when the truth suddenly closes in from all sides.

(translated from the Portuguese by the author)

JOSEPH TIMKO

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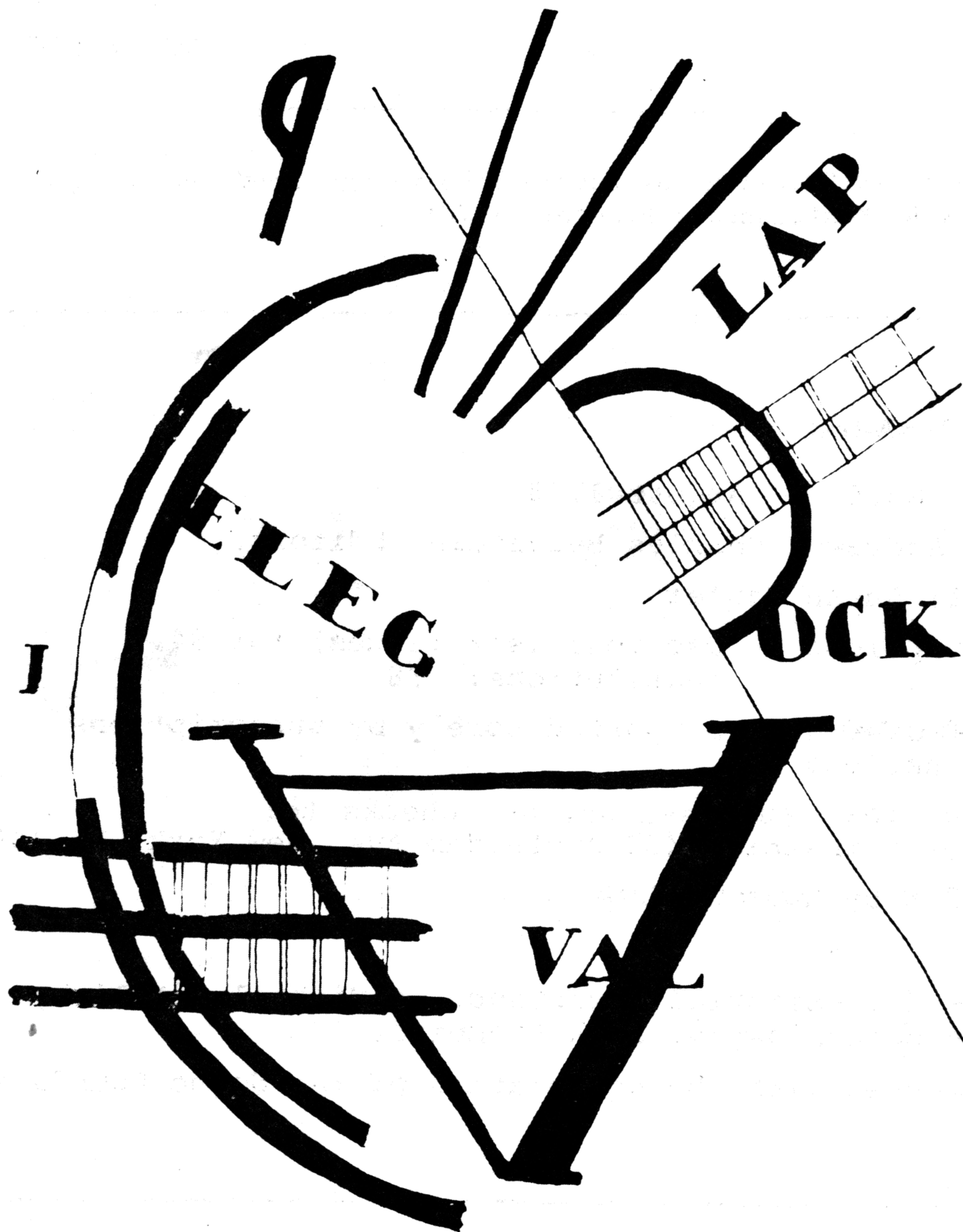
All queries, submissions, and checks to:
Charles Bernstein, 464 Amsterdam Ave, New York, NY 10024.

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